

# Shakespeare Alive and Well at ES

By Donna Davis, Director of Ethics & Business Conduct



The Shakespearean players (left to right standing): Tim Flaherty, Bill Shea, Keri Pierce, Dave Parkinson, Lynn Tedesco, Sam Kim, (kneeling) Thea Ewing, Bill Robbins.

How do you draw employees into a candid discussion about ethics and leadership? Tell an interesting story with charismatic characters and an element of intrigue. And who better to tell such a story than William Shakespeare.

The year is 1415. Henry V is the newly crowned king of England, leading a small army against the French. Henry's soldiers are tired, sick, and out-numbered ten

to one. The French are fresh and well armored. Despite obvious obstacles, young Henry must convince his troops that they can win the Battle of Agincourt. It is here that Henry makes his most famous motivational speech—the St. Crispin’s Day speech.

500 years later, the principles of effective leadership are steadfast, and the Bard remains a source of inspiration. The St. Crispin’s Day speech is an excellent example of how communication can motivate a group to embrace the vision of the organization.

### Leadership training by role-playing

Organized through ES Training and Development, the Shakespeare leadership seminars are led by Kenneth L. Adelman, a former arms control director in the Reagan administration, and his wife, Carol, also a former Reagan administration official for the Agency for International Development. The training seminars apply Shakespeare’s insights to modern business scenarios. Initiated in 1999 as one component of ES’ experiential learning process, more than 320 employees have participated in these one-day workshops.

Henry V is used in the Ethics and Leadership seminar. Diversity and business risk are the major themes discussed using Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* seminar centers on managing change.

No pre-reading or particular expertise of Shakespeare is required. Straying from the classic didactic lecture, the Adelmans incorporate fun into the training process through the use of video clips, role-playing, and dramatic readings. At the end of the day, a few brave participants dress in costume to act in after-dinner skits (much to the delight of the other attendees). “The joy of this, says Mrs. Adelman, “is bringing the most beautiful words of the last millennium into the next.”

### Why Shakespeare?

The ancient wisdom of Shakespeare is the ideal choice for interactive leadership training for two reasons. First, Shakespeare has the keenest awareness of what makes people tick. Since success in business depends on people, Shakespeare can show employees how to succeed. Second, Shakespeare tells the greatest stories. Executives can learn more from vibrant stories than pale lessons.

The dramatic themes of Shakespeare continue to resonate in the modern environment of business. Employees, like soldiers, must hone their skills to compete. Leaders must motivate employees towards successful achievement of central goals. Everyone requires an understanding of human nature. “Business revolves around people, and no one has either the depth of insights into people or the appeal to reveal those depths greater than Shakespeare,” said Mr. Adelman.

For information on this and other Ethics subjects, call the Ethics Office on (410)765-5546, or log on to the Ethics web sites:

Intranet—<http://w789900.md.essd.northgrum.com/>

and Internet—<http://sensor.northgrum.com/ethics/default.htm>.